



# Discovery of the "name" *America* as a continent in world map dates to April 25, 1507

Brindha V<sup>\*</sup>

<sup>\*</sup>Correspondence to: E-mail: [brindbiotech@gmail.com](mailto:brindbiotech@gmail.com)

## Publication History

Received: 15 February 2014

Accepted: 04 March 2014

Published: 1 April 2014

## Citation

Brindha V. Discovery of the "name" *America* as a continent in world map dates to April 25, 1507. *Discovery*, 2014, 14(35), 6

## Publication License



© The Author(s) 2014. Open Access. This article is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0 \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

## General Note



Article is recommended to print as color digital version in recycled paper.

AMERICA was named in honor of Amerigo Vespucci, for his discovery of the mainland of the New World. Since the late 19th century, conflicting ideas about the truth of the derivation have been set forth with profound cultural and political implications. The earliest known use of the name America for this landmass dates from April 25, 1507, where it was used for what is now known as South America. It first appears on a small globe map with twelve time zones, together with the largest wall map made to date, both created by the German cartographer Martin Waldseemuller and Saint-Die-des-Vosges in France. These were the first maps to show the Americas as a land mass separate from Asia. Martin Waldseemuller's large world map was the most exciting product of that research effort. He included on the map data gathered by Vespucci during his voyages of 1501-1502 to the New World. It is believed that a new continent was named in honor of the great Florentine explorer, astronomer and cartographer Amerigo Vespucci, who served first the Spanish and then Portuguese monarchs as a navigator, made three trips to the shores of the land that later would be called South America - in 1499, 1501 and 1503. During these journeys he made up several maps of the new territory, but the originals have not survived. Some copies were made where the unknown continent is called not America but "New World" (Terra Nova). Vespucci did not call the land he explored America. There is no mention of this name and in his letters - the only documents that have survived from the legacy of the great navigator. For the first time the word "America" appeared on the map in 1507 to illustrate the so-called "third voyage to the New World" (Vespucci was mistakenly considered the author), released by a German amateur cartographer, publisher and bookseller Martin Waldseemuller. Waldseemuller named the new lands "America" on his 1507 map in the recognition of Vespucci's understanding that a new continent had been uncovered following Columbus' and subsequent voyages in the late 15th century. Columbus clearly made a monumental discovery in showing Europe *how* to sail across the Atlantic; Vespucci's great contribution was to tell Europe that the land Columbus had found was not Asia but a New World. The naming of America, then, becomes essential to a full understanding of history and cultural values especially when considered in terms of the range of theories about the origin of the name.